respectively. As cocoanut palm cultivation was the main occupation of the people, the Member suggested that a model cocoanut farm on an area of seven acres might be opened and maintained by the side of the canal now under construction. A culvert of a width of not more than 25 feet at Prayikkara patam(Shertallai-Vadakku *Pakuthi*) was also stated to be necessary for the benefit of the lands there. In view of the extremely unhealthy nature of the taluk, investigations should be started by Government in respect of the diseases peculiar to the taluk and arrangements made for the supply of good drinking water which was the prime necessity of the people. The Member suggested that a competent medical officer having European training might be appointed to the Shertallai District Hospital with instructions to carry on the proposed investigations and publish the results thereof. Lastly, he stated that an allowance to be styled "sand allowance" might be sanctioned to be paid to the officers posted to Shertallai, similar to the local allowances paid to officers in hilly tracts.

Dewan's reply.— I thought that the Member was going to speak about the principle on which the expenditure on a taluk should be incurred in proportion to the receipts from, and the population of, that taluk. But he has spent most of his time in dealing with the details regarding the various needs of the Shertallai taluk. I have noted all the points he has raised. Government are already devoting, and will always devote, special attention to the Shertallai taluk, knowing that the taluk is labouring under certain special disabilities. I have had occasion to visit the taluk and I shall again visit it when I go on tour in that direction and acquaint myself further with the needs of the taluk.

5. Reduction of the Salaries of High Officers.

Mr. Raman Narayanan (Member, Ettumanur Taluk) submitted that the administration of the State was not being conducted on sound lines, although its cost was increasing year after year. Officers in responsible positions were not considering seriously whether their activities contributed to the advancement of the prosperity of the people Whenever the execution of any public work was urged by the people, Government pleaded want of funds; but large amounts were being spent by Government on schemes which were of doubtful use to the State. He complained of the large outlay incurred by the Government from time to time on the construction of roads on behalf of the European planters in the Devicolam Division and cited the Northern Outlet road, the Western Outlet road, and the Devicolam-Kumili road as instances in point. The Member next referred to the Kallar Hydro-Electric Scheme and spoke at length about the enormous expenditure that would have to be incurred by the State if the scheme was to be financed by Government. He also protested against the proposed participation of the State in the Cochin Harbour scheme. With the promotion of the Deputy Chief Engineer as Acting Chief Engineer, the Member suggested that the former post might be abolished and that the Chief Engineer might be given a Personal Assistant in the place of the Deputy Chief Engineer. The Member next stated that the revised Puduval and Land Conservancy Rules were productive of hardship to the people. The appointment of Assistant Tahsildars and the organisation of *puduval* survey parties did not produce the desired results. He also pointed out that the expected demand from the Forest Department was diminishing gradually, although restrictions were imposed on the removal of mature trees from the forests and the prices of timber and fuel were increased. The Member complained that the recent amendments to the Police Regulation had enormously increased the powers of the Police Officers and that public safety and protection could not be expected from the Department. The salaries of high officers were needlessly exorbitant, especially of those who were brought down from Europe and British India, and he urged that only Travancoreans should be appointed in the State service on smaller salaries than those now allowed. He added that it should be definitely ruled by Government that no officer, except those in the Huzur office and the High Court, should be paid more than Rs. 500 a month. There was no special need for the appointment of a separate Forest Utilisation officer. The Member disapproved of the type of education now imparted in schools, and referred to the events that gave rise to the recent students' strikes. He said

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that the Government, who were only the trustees of the Devaswoms which were under their management at present, should hand them over to the descendants of such of their original donors as were fit to take charge of them. He also said that the people of Travancore were extremely poor and that it was erroneous to think that they could stand any additional taxation. The Member concluded by praying that the revenues of the State might be devoted in an economic and equitable manner to the welfare of the people, that burdensome taxes be not imposed on them and that the poverty of the country be removed by the development of industries and other measures.

Dewan's reply.—I must deprecate the action of the members who seek to criticise Government in regard to matters which are under correspondence and which have not been finally disposed of. I appreciate all sound, *bona fide* criticism. Except in regard to confidential matters, Government will ever be ready to give information on any matter to any member who applies for it. What I would request the members of this Assembly is that they should acquaint themselves with facts before they offer their criticism on specific matters. I do not propose to say anything more in reply to the Member's speech.

6. Undesirability of increasing Taxation.

Mr. K. Velayudhan Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Haripad) stated that enhancement of revenue should be effected without needlessly burdening the people and that the abnormal increase in the receipts of the State at present as compared with those realised a few decades ago showed that there was enough money for Government to meet all legitimate expenditure, if only they set about to economise in the right spirit. He also observed, quoting figures, that all the principal heads of revenue exhibited marked advancement, which was brought about without due regard for the people's welfare. It was an oft-repeated argument that important measures of reform could not be carried out for want of funds. During every administration, departments were reorganised and the pay of several officers, already high-paid, was increased without revising the pay of the lower ranks of the public service which really stood in need of improvement. The expenditure on education had increased out of all proportion to the real requirements of the Department and the additional allotments for the purpose sanctioned in recent years had been already devoted to the improvement of the pay of the staff of English schools and inspecting officers. The number of inspecting officers was far too large and could be reduced with advantage. The burden on the student population was already unbearable and Government were not justified in increasing the school fees. The P. W. D. was over-staffed and the work turned out by that Department was quite disproportionate to the salaries paid. During the last one and a half years taxes had been increased in several directions, *e. g.*, the value of copying paper and process fees, *tharavila* and *thadivila* for *puduval* lands, Anchal rates, and fees on markets and evening bazaars. The Member endeavoured to prove that none of these imposts were justifiable. He next represented that the tariff rates of timber had been increased which made it difficult for the people to get good timber for house-construction. In spite of this increase the administration of the Forest Department did not yield much surplus, chiefly on account of the heavy expenditure incurred on the staff and it was necessary to effect retrenchments in the Department. The action of Government in calling upon the Municipal Councils to levy fresh taxes and increase the existing fees was objectionable. Government were not justified in asking the Municipal Councils of smaller towns to levy house tax at 3 per cent. on the annual value, while in bigger towns the rate was only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. He pointed out that the license fees now realised from boats under the Public Canals and Public Ferries Regulation might be done away with, as such fees would not bring in much income, owing to the fact that boat-owners got their boats registered in Cochin where the fees were lower. He emphasised that British India should not be taken as the model for the levy of taxes in Travancore, as the earning capacity of the people here was lower—a fact that could be elucidated by an enquiry into the economic condition of the people. He urged that high officers in Travancore received a remuneration out of all proportion to the requirements of the

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